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Class

Book

PRESENTED BY



Service of Capt. Thomas Munsen

A:HARTFORD & NEW:HAVEN PIONEER:



MUNSON:REVNION
AVGVST:17th:1887:



"The Life, Characters and Public Services
of Capt. Thomas C. Weston"
(A Pioneer of Hartford and New Haven)

1637-1887

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

QI

THE FIRST

The Life, Character and Public Services of Captain Thomas Munson. (A Pioneer of Stamford and New Haven.)

Historical sketches of the District and Royal Arms
etc. 177. 88th 1

I have read your Address on Capt. Thomas Munson with interest and pleasure.—*J. Hammond Trumbull, LL.D., Pres. Conn. Hist. Soc.*

Wednesday, August 17, 1887.

NEW HAVEN:
TUTTLE, MOREHOUSE & TAYLOR, PRINTERS.

1887

siders—1,475 of them were over 50 years of age.

"The Life, Character and Public Services
of Capt. Thomas Munson"
(A Pioneer of Hartford and New Haven.)

1637-1887

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

OF

THE FIRST

MUNSON FAMILY REUNION

HELD IN THE

CITY OF NEW HAVEN,

Wednesday, August 17, 1887.



NEW HAVEN:
TUTTLE, MOREHOUSE & TAYLOR, PRINTERS.
1887.

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CONSPECTUS OF TOPICS IN THE ADDRESS.

Salutatory,	13	Plantation Court,	29
Our Adam,	13	First Jury,	30
Indian Situation in 1637,	14	Court of Appeals,	30
Colonists' Situation in 1637,	15	<i>Legislative</i> ,	30
(Storm Rising),	15	New Haven General Court,	30
<i>Peguot War</i> ,	16	Connecticut General Assembly,	31
(Twilight),	17	<i>Military</i> ,	32
<i>Munson's Transatlantic History</i> ,	17	Sergeant,	33
<i>Pioneer of Hartford</i> ,	18	(Artillery),	35
<i>Pioneer of New Haven</i> ,	18	(Troope),	35
(Town-Square),	18	Ensign,	35
(Lands),	19	Lieutenant,	36
(A Barn),	19	(Grand Committee),	36
<i>Private Biography</i> ,	20	(King Philip's War),	36
OFFICIAL CAREER AND PUBLIC SERVICES,	22	Captain,	40
Committee-man,	22	<i>Portrait and Character</i> ,	40
Appraiser,	23	POSTERITY OF THOMAS MUNSON,	43
Inspector,	23	His son Samuel,	43
Supervisor,	23	Grandson Samuel,	45
Determiner,	24	Grandson Thomas,	45
Diplomatist,	25	Grandson John,	46
Executive,	26	Grandson Theophilus,	45
Townsman,	27	Grandson Joseph,	48
(Hopkins Grammar School),	27	Grandson Stephen,	48
("Third Division"),	27	Grandson Caleb,	49
(Speech on the Bell),	27	Migrations,	49
(Seating the Meeting-House),	28	<i>A Few Names</i> ,	50
Judicial,	29	<i>The Typical Munson</i> ,	53
		<i>Concluding Generalizations</i> ,	54



1874, 14, 1914
HISTORICAL ADDRESS

BY

REV. MYRON A. MUNSON, M. A.,

A great-great-great-great-great-grandson of Capt. Thomas Munson.

I congratulate you, admirable and esteemed cousins, upon the dawning of our Quarter-Millennial. Arise we and with reverent hands break the seal and roll away the stone from the mouth of the family sepulchre.

This day is the resurrection of the name and the ^{Salutatory.} fame of our greatest grandsire, Thomas Munson. With him, at his august beck, step forth from their shadowy habitations in God's-acre sterling sons and delectable daughters by thousands, smiling and glad though serene, to join with voiceless fellowship and silent rejoicings in our commemorative and congratulatory festival.

Half a thousand minds are eagerly inquiring: What was the origin of our venerable originator? He suddenly emerges from silence and darkness,—his antecedents as mysterious as those of the lightning's flash. He ^{Our Adam.} was never born,—so far as history knows. Do we not conceive of the Adam of the human race as about twenty-five years of age at the moment of his creation? In a similar manner the Adam of our family, without any antecedents or any nativity, suddenly makes his appearance on the stage of life, like a new creation, at the age of twenty-five. This first appearance was at Hartford, by the Indians called Suckiaug, two hundred and fifty years ago last May, and he is already accoutred as a soldier,

about to engage in a war as pregnant with momentous results, it may be, as any which has ever been waged.

At that period the region from the Atlantic ocean to the Alleghanies was one vast, solemn forest,—a paradise of war-paths and hunting-grounds. The throne of Indian

^{Indian} _{Situation in 1637.} power was among The Five Nations, of central New York,—usually called The Mohawks, from that confederate which enjoyed the supremacy.

Proud, warlike, vehement, irresistible, their name was a terror to all other red-men. Every spring, two old Mohawk chiefs might have been seen going from village to village through Connecticut, collecting tribute and haughtily issuing orders from the great council at Onondaga.

The number of Indians who were occupying the territory now known as the State of Connecticut has been very diversely estimated at from six or seven to twelve or twenty thousand. These estimates imply from 1200 to 4000 warriors. It is conceived that one-half of these may have been Pequots, whose forts and wigwams extended along the Sound some thirty miles. The Thames, on which New London is situated, was then called Pequot river, and one of the two great forts of the nation—the one at which the historic battle occurred—was located eight miles northeast of New London. The Pequots were the most ambitious, the most valiant, the most fierce and the most powerful by far of all the communities eastward of the Hudson. They were a terror to all the wide-reaching wilderness around them: they were to New England what the Mohawks were to the whole country eastward of the Mississippi. To them, as well as to the Mohawks, the Quinnipiacs of this neighborhood paid tribute.

Such was the Indian situation in the spring of 1637:

what was that of the Colonists? Hartford was two years old; north and south of it, adjoining, were Windsor and

colonists' Wethersfield. Twenty-six miles north was Aga-
Situation in 1637. wam, one year old; we know it as Springfield.

Sixty miles below Hartford,—forty-six as the crow flies,—at the mouth of the river, on the west shore, was Saybrook fort, one year old. These five infant settlements were the only habitations of white men in all the Connecticut valley. Their neighbors were about a hundred miles distant, and mind you these were roadless, wilderness miles. There was no New Haven, Milford, Guilford, Middletown, Waterbury,—but, rather, Quinnipiac, Wepowaug, Menunkatuc, Mattabesett, Mattatuck. The Bay State had no Westfield, Northfield, Deerfield, Hadley or Northampton,—but, instead, Woronoco, Squakheag, Pocomptuck, Norwotock and Nonotuck. Accordingly when trouble arose with the Pequots the aspect of affairs was extremely serious. The white settlements could muster two hundred and fifty or two hundred and seventy-five men capable of bearing arms; there were 500 Indian braves within easy marching distance of the mouth of the Connecticut.

Endicott's expedition, calling the Pequots to account for murders, converted that nation into a gigantic hornets' nest. Killing whites became their recreation. Several at

Wethersfield were assassinated and two girls were (Storm Ris-
ing.) carried into captivity. The savages, dressed in

the clothes of the English whom they had murdered, would approach the fort at Saybrook with defiant jeers: "Come out and get your clothes again!" and they would mimic and mock the prayers and shrieks and groans of the wretched colonists whom they had tortured. Great was the distress of the settlements. A cunning and ferocious enemy haunted them and hunted them day and night.

Ninety men, of whom forty-two were furnished by Hartford, descended the Connecticut under the leadership of Capt. Mason, and sailed eastward past the Pequot country to the vicinity of Point Judith: seventy-seven men disembarked among the Narragansetts, took up their march westerly, and, at daybreak on the 5th of June, surprised one of the hostile forts—a palisade on a hill, enclosing about an acre, and embracing seventy wigwams. A dog barked—a Pequot yelled, “Owanux! Owanux!” In rushed the lion-like pale-faces and engaged in a desultory, heroical warfare. At length, in desperation, the commander seized a fire-brand and applied it to the dry mats with which one of the rude dwellings was covered. Several hundred of the Pequots perished by the musket, the sword and the conflagration, and only seven escaped.

While the victorious army was retreating, three hundred warriors, dispatched by Sassacus from the other fortress, rapidly approached until they beheld the smoking and smouldering ruins which were the crematory of their brethren; then stamping and tearing their hair, they rushed down with great fury upon the conquerors. They were promptly repulsed, with a hundred slain and wounded.

It was in this terrific war, pregnant with inexpressibly momentous consequences, that Thomas Munson made his first appearance, two centuries and a half ago; and he was preëminently a military man during the forty-eight years which followed.

You may note, if you please, that our spirited and intrepid soldier received an allotment in the Soldiers' Field, (on the northern margin of Hartford,) in recognition of his meritorious services in this war, and that he was subsequently presented with an additional hundred acres for the same cause.¹

¹ “The Soldiers' Field and its Original Proprietors,” by F. H. Parker, Esq.

We have recognized that Hartford was two years old at the date of the Pequot war; whether Soldier Munson had been there from the beginning, as is most (Twilight.) likely, we are not informed. He had probably spent some months or years in the older towns about Massachusetts Bay; but we lack light upon the subject. Boston, at the time of the war, was seven years old; Salem, nine; Plymouth, seventeen.

Munson's Transatlantic History.

In respect to his transatlantic history there is nothing known with positiveness. Traditions have come down, along numerous and widely separated family lines, that he had some kind of connection with Wales; and it is the only tradition concerning him which has any value whatever. In some way his early history acquired a Welsh tinge. But there is no doubt of his English nationality. The Monson race belonging to the peerage has a known and accepted history of five hundred years; our American history extends back one-half that distance: the presumption is almost a certainty that our branch is from that ancient trunk. Lord Monson, Aide-de-Camp to the Queen, concluded his fourth letter to me, 11 March, 1887, in this graceful way: "With best wishes for the welfare of my Transatlantic Cousins and for the success of your Autumnal gathering." A brother of Lord Monson, Sir Edmund, Her Majesty's Minister to the King of Denmark, wrote from Copenhagen, July 24, 1886: "When I was appointed Attaché to the British Legation at Washington, in 1858, my Father, Lord Monson, was very anxious to know the subsequent career of the Monsons which had emigrated to America in the

Seventeenth Century." Sir Edmund observes again: "I have little doubt that our common ancestor was a Dane."

Turning from things obscure, let us return to what may be known. Our forefather was born two hundred and seventy-five years ago, somewhere, and two hundred and

fifty years ago was a pioneer of Hartford and *Pioneer of Hartford.* participated in the Pequot war; after the war, he continued to reside in that plantation a little more than two years, apparently,—having a house-lot comprising two and one-half acres on the present High street, opposite the head of Walnut: this street was then known as "the highway leading from the Cow-pasture to Mr. Allen's land." There was a house on this ground in February, 1640, which was probably built by Munson. Previously to this date he had sold the place to Nath. Kellogg, and he had also sold his portion of the Soldiers' Field. Two parcels of land, on opposite sides of the Connecticut river, had been forfeited by his removal from the plantation.

In 1639, at the age of twenty-seven, Thomas became a pioneer of New Haven, then known as Quinnipiac. The settlement was begun the preceding year. The beginners

Pioneer of New Haven. had laid out a town-site half a mile square, having its base, on the south, parallel to the West Creek, and having its east side parallel with East Creek; both of these arms of the sea were navigable. The town-plot was divided into nine equal squares, of

which the central was called the Market-place, (Town-Square.) designed for public uses; it is the famous Green, upon which we are now assembled. Each of the eight streets was called "the towne streete"—having no distinctive name, and at the end of each there was a gate. In the Market-place the military forces were drilled, and here they assembled when an alarm was sounded. Here was the watch-house, the head-quarters of the night-

watchmen. Here were the other public buildings,—and especially *the* public building called the Meeting-house, which was the sanctuary where all worshiped, but also the town-house, court-house, state-house, and, to some extent at least, the arsenal. “The Church of Christ in New Haven,” which was the only ecclesiastical organization within the limits of the present town during the first one hundred and four years of its history, still survives and has opened to us its hospitable doors on this occasion.

The “Proprietors” purchased lands from the Indians with a common fund, and there were nine “divisions” of different sections of the so-called common-land, extending over a hundred and twenty years.¹ The amount of land (Lands.) each proprietor received in the distribution was determined by his investment in the common stock, the number of heads in his family, his official dignity, and other considerations. The size of the house-lots in the town-square was similarly determined. To certain settlers who did not contribute to the common stock “small lots” were granted,—most of them along the West Creek, opposite the town-square. Such “planters” also received limited allotments of land in the second “division,”—“layd out beyond the East River betwixt our pastors farme and the Indians wiggwams.”

On the north side of the town-square was the house-lot of Robert Newman, afterwards ruling-elder. That lot, of perhaps two and one-half acres, is now divided by Temple street, whose superb Gothic arch of elms you admired as (A Barn.) you were entering this sanctuary. On Mr. Newman’s place was a barn,—Cotton Mather calls it “a mighty barn,”—which was utilized as a place of civic and religious assembly before the erection of a meeting-house. In that historic barn the constitution of the

¹ Ninth division in 1760.

colony was created in June, 1639. It was ordained that those not present¹ who were to be "planters," should subscribe this "Fundamental Agreement," as it was called, with their own hand; and so it comes to pass that we have the autograph of Thomas Munson, which is sixth in a list of forty-eight.

The first *definite* date touching Thomas Munson's history as a New Havener is April 3d, 1640, when the court ordered "thatt brother Andrewes and brother Mounson shall veiw the grounds of difference betwixt Mr. Malbon and Thomas Moulenor the elder." This appointment was complimentary to "brother Mounson" as a new-comer, and only twenty-eight years of age.

And now, patient seekers for knowledge, we have somewhat tediously worked our way through the fogs and snags and sand-bars of the subject into an open sea where fair sailing rewards us.

Private Biography.

The private biography of our ancestor, as known to us, is very brief.

As early as 1640, he received one of the "small lots" on the south side of George Street, along the West Creek. Eleven years later, intending probably to remove to Delaware Bay, he disposed of his lot together with a dwelling-house, barn, shop, hen-house, garden and trees. His residence the next five years is unrevealed. In 1656, he bought the lot on the southeast corner of Elm and Church streets, opposite the Green, where the "Blue Meeting-house" afterwards stood; just below, on Elm street, were the habitations of Mr. Davenport and Gov. Eaton.

¹ Sixty-three names of those present were inscribed by the secretary.

Six years later he purchased the place formerly owned by Robert Newman on Grove street—now bisected by Temple street. This was his home during the last twenty-three years of his life. His neighbor eastward was Andrewes, the ex-innkeeper; his neighbors westward were Benjamin Linge and his life-long guest, Col. Dixwell, the regicide. Capt. Munson's home was afterwards owned by his son and three of his grandsons successively; and in more recent times Noah Webster, the maker of dictionaries, had a residence on that ground.

Thomas was the father of three children: Elizabeth, the wife of Richard Higginbotham, a tailor, who removed to Elizabethtown, N. J., and thence to Stamford; Samuel, to whom we shall return later; and Hannah, who married Joseph Tuttle.

We know little of the domestic animals which added animation to the home-life of these children; but there is distinct mention of a dog—not a detestable barking whelp, but an exemplary creature—one that is silent, thoughtful and courageous, and willing to bite—when that is his duty. This worthy fellow's function was to discourage stupidity. Accordingly, in 1661, just ten days before the arrival of Goffe and Whalley, some ill-natured inhabitant complained of certain "doggs wth bite horses as they passe in the streets, to the endangering of their Riders: Sargent Munsons dogg, and Thos. Johnsons dogg, was spoken off." Well—some people are hard to please. Sydney Smith says he once heard a man "speak disrespectfully of the equator."

Our first father owned lands which he cultivated; but his trade was that of a carpenter. He and Boykin contracted to do a part of the work in building the first meeting-house,—in particular, some work connected with the tower and turret. He and Andrewes built the first

bridge over the Quinnipiac. His business was not limited to the New Haven plantation. You should add that his enterprising spirit led him to take a deep practical interest in the project of establishing a colony at Delaware Bay.

Though, as a recent writer remarks, "there was a woful shrinkage of estate in those days," though there were pervasive business disasters and impoverishing wars, and though our public-spirited forefather was consumingly devoted to civic and military service, yet, beginning as we suppose empty-handed, he came to be numbered with the wealthy.

It is scarcely necessary to say that this man worshiped and served the Almighty Lord, and was for some forty-five years, a member of the church which assembles under this roof. His burial, in 1685, was on the Green, a few yards from this spot, where Joanna his wife had been interred seven years previously. The grave-stones of both may be seen in the old cemetery.

OFFICIAL CAREER AND PUBLIC SERVICES.

Turn we now, Mr. President and worthy kinsmen, to the official career and the public services of Thomas Munson. We give attention to a number of points in his wide and rich experience as a committee-man, and then take up the honorable story of his executive, judicial, legislative and military career.

Committee-man.

The term committee (pardon this parenthesis) ordinarily indicates a number of men who are appointed by a larger body to examine into some particular matter or

manage some specific affair; this one thing done, it ceases. Its limitation is a peculiarity.

Munson was appointed by government to appraise property; I have noted ten estates of which he ^{Appraiser.} was an appraiser. In 1670 he was member of a colonial committee "to set an appraisement upon the land belonging to the several plantations."

He was often appointed (with others) to "view" objects and conditions. Thus he viewed¹ the "way to the Plaines" where a highway was to be located; he viewed² the Quinnipiac to select a site for a bridge; he ^{Inspector.} inspected³ the equipment of the cavalry; he inspected the West Bridge⁴ and the historic Neck Bridge⁵ which, four years later, afforded refuge to Goffe and Whalley when nearly overtaken by King Charles's emissaries; he inspected the condition of the first meeting-house eight times within twenty-one years,⁶—the last time using his influence decisively, it would appear, in favor of building a new house instead of multiplying repairs upon the old. At an uncertain date, "The Townes men Agreed to goe to all the Inhabitance [of the] Towne and farmes to see how the children are educate in reading the word of God: Lievttenant Munson and J—— Chidsey for the square of the Towne," etc.

Munson was appointed (with others) to supervise work for the public: to fence vacant lots;⁷ to construct a chest in the meeting-house "to putt the pikes in to keepe them from warping;"⁸ "to mend y^e ladder" by which ^{Supervisor.} a sentinel on "dayes of publique meeting" went up to take his stand upon the meeting-house;⁹ to provide a suitable building for "a Colony Schoole (for teaching of

¹ 1642. ² 1646. ³ Alone; 1656. ⁴ 1656. ⁵ 1651 and 1657.

⁶ 1647, 1648—Jan. and July, 1659, 1662—Apr. and Aug., 1665, 1668.

⁷ 1641. ⁸ 1645. ⁹ 1649.

latine, Greeke, & Hebrew);”¹ to execute an order “that the market place be forth-with cleared & the wood carryed to the watch-howse & there piled for the vse & succour of the watch in cold weather.”² In 1658 a scheme six years old had become so interesting that Thomas Munson and three others were chosen to consider whether “ye beavour pond brooke can be brought to the Towne, that the mill might be set up here;” this committee reported to another plenipotentiary committee of which Munson was a member, and the bold work was undertaken. In the records there is an abstract of a speech upon this subject by our ancestor, in which he specifies “the great dam,” “y^e great trench,” and the “pen-stocke” of which there is mention twenty years later.

This man, who was so rich in the faculty of judgment, was a member of committees to make final determinations. In two or more cases he was chosen as arbiter.³ He was selected (with others) to lay out roads, as “the ^{Determiner.} highway from Woodbury to Pawgasuck [i. e. Derby] to the most convenient place for a ferry;”⁴ and also the conspicuous East Haven thoroughfare, agreeably to this record under date of 1677: “Capt. Munson informed y^e Towne, that himselfe Capt. Rosewell & John Cooper seneor who was appointed by y^e Towne had now stated out and settled a highway from y^e ferry unto y^e farmes at y^e iron works.” He was chosen to establish the boundaries of towns. Thus, in 1671, the General Court “appoints L^{nt} Thomas Munson to runn the depth of the bownds of Brandford and Guilford to the northwards, according to their grant.” In 1674 the Lieutenant assisted in establishing the “diuideing bownds” between New Haven and Branford; and in 1675 he was on a committee “to see to the settlement of both the

¹ 1660.² 1645.³ 1649, 1654.⁴ 1675.

bownds and distribution of lands" in the new plantation of Derby. In 1679 "The Town did appoint Mr. W^m Jones, Tho: Munson & John Cooper seneor theyer comittee to state out y^e Indians Land on ye east side."

Our judicious ancestor served on committees whose duties were diplomatic,—as, e. g., to persuade W^m Andrewes "not to give up keeping the ordinarie;"¹ to treat with Fowler concerning the sale of his ^{Diplomatist.} interest in the mill;² to treat with Christopher Todd concerning "y^e removeall of y^e mills on this side nearer y^e rocke & soe to make y^m breast mills;"³ "to treat with the Indians about some matters of complaint, as, planting where they ought not," "killing of hoggs, and stealing pease;"⁴ and again, pending the inquiry "whether a village might be settled neare the black Rock"—a notable promontory on the east side of the harbor and at the north end of The Cove—the site of a fort in the Revolutionary days,—"Brother Andrewes and Bro: Munson were desired to Treat with the Indians about the exchange of some Land."⁵ One other item: within two or three years after the English founded New Haven, some of the colonists purchased large tracts of land on both sides of the Delaware; but the hostility of the Swedes and the Dutch spoiled their attempts at trade and settlement. In 1654 there was a revival of the Delaware movement, and a committee was constituted, including Munson, "to whom," says the record, "any that are willing to goe may rapaire to be taken notice of." Early in the next year, between fifty and sixty men had found leaders of nerve and enterprise in Munson and Cooper, and attempted very resolutely to establish plantations at Delaware Bay, with a view to erecting eventually a separate common-

¹ 1648.

² 1653.

³ 1671.

⁴ 1654.

⁵ 1660.

wealth. The records of the General Court for 1655 contain the petition of the adventurers, with the conclusion, namely: "The Court returned, That having read and considered some propositions presented by Thomas Munson and John Cooper, of New Haven, in the name and behalfe of sundrie persons of this jurisdiction and elsewhere, appearing as undertaker for the first planting of Delaware, they are willing to grant libertie to one or both of those magistrates mentioned to goe alonge with them. And they purpose when God shall so enlarge the English plantations in Delaware as that they shall grow the greater part of the jurisdiction the gouernor may be one yeare in one part and the next yeare in another," &c. Samuel Eaton, Francis Newman and Stephen Goodyear were disposed to have a hand in this high enterprise; but it was presently reported that three ships had "come to the Sweeds," difficulties loomed up formidably, and the great and superb project took its place with the splendid visions of Dante and Milton.

Executive.

It is time to direct attention to our pioneer's record as an executive officer, elected for lengthened periods of service. The modest though at that time important and respectable position of viewer of fences¹ need not detain us. Our Lieutenant was made plantation-commissary when that office was created at the beginning of King Philip's war.² He was chosen treasurer of the town for the unexpired term of Benjamin Linge.³ Three years he was elected lister or assessor.⁴ He served as Townsman

¹ 1641, 1644, 1660, 1663, 1667.

² 1675.

³ 1669.

⁴ 1649, 1668, 1678.

thirteen years,¹ first in 1656 and last in 1683; four
Townsman years he was at the head of the board. It de-
volved upon him and his associates to take a census of the
Quinnipiac Indians and of the acres of land allotted to
them;² to change the location of the ferry to "the Red
Rocke;"³ to encourage the erection of a village for the
inhabitants at Stony River and South End (East Haven);⁴
to resurrect and revivify the Hopkins Grammar School⁵

(Hopkins Grammar School.) —the Captain, as chief of the Townsmen, making
a speech and Deputy-Governor Jones following:

to consider whether health requires that burials
upon The Green should cease,⁶—though it was yet one
hundred and thirty-eight years before the place of burial
was changed;⁷ to consider, again, whether the burying-
place—"about 20 rod square"—ought not to "be fenced
about and kept in a comely manner,"—but the matter had
hindrance until 1690, when an order was issued that the
place of burial "be fened with a stone wall . . . in
Ovall forme."

As a townsman Capt. Munson was desired⁸ (with others)
to revise the report of a former committee on the *third*
division of common-land, "and allsoe to endeavor
("Third Division.") to purchase of y^e Indians such lands as are yet
unpurchased." This division took place in 1680;
the first and second had occurred in 1640.

The call to public meetings—religious, military and
civic—during forty-three years, was by a drum beaten in
the turret on the meeting-house, and often about some of
the streets. The drummer was instructed "to
(Speech on the Bell.) observe y^e windē & beat so that y^e whole towne

¹ 1656, 1657, 1658, 1662, 1663 (First), 1668, 1675, 1676 (First), 1677, 1678 (First), 1681, 1682, 1683 (First). This office was known later as that of select-
man.

² 1652. ³ 1668. ⁴ 1670. ⁵ 1677.

⁶ 1659. ⁷ 1797: stones removed, 1821. ⁸ 1678.

may heare." In 1681, more than two centuries ago, a bell was brought into the harbor,—of which the public records take notice as follows: "Capt. Thomas Munson on of y^e townsmen declared y^e occasion of this meeting was to Consider y^e buysines of y^e bell for y^e Townes use which was spoken of the last Towne meeting (which meeting was in April last) at which y^e Townsmen were desyred to Consider y^e matter how y^e bell might suit y^e Townes occasions and to veiw y^e Terrett of y^e meeting house, and to make returne to y^e Towne of theyer apprehensions in y^e Case: Now they had veiwed the s^d Terrett and doe judg y^e place may be fitted to hang it in for y^e use of y^e Towne, and allsoe being informed that y^e owner of y^e bell had sent to have it brought to ye Bay ¹ in Joseph Allsups vessel, and that y^e sayd Joseph had undertaken that y^e Bell should yet stay untill another returne, and it having Lyen soe long it would not be han-som for y^e Town to put it of, and therefore it wer necessary that now y^e Towne would Consider whether they will have it or not and how to raise y^e pay for it which will bee fourteen pound in money." It was voted that the bell be purchased, and that the townsmen have it properly hanged for use.

In 1678 our Captain had a hand *ex officio* in the delicate task of seating the Meeting-house. The men were to occupy one side of the house and the women the other, while the assignment of places to individuals was to have respect to civic dignity, military rank, age, wealth, social value, and so on. Mr. Jones (Seating the Meeting-House.) reported that the committee had finished seating the men "and had begun y^e seating of women but found some dificulty in that matter." Ah yes,—that beautiful absence of "dificulty" in the seating of men! The

¹ Massachusetts.

report alleged some “want of Roome,” with reference to which “Divers desyred that y^e women might be seated as farr as seats would reach;” but it was cautiously replied “that y^e comittee had some reasons that were not meet to mention at this time.” The ex-Deputy-Governor, who had risked his neck to defend Goffe and Whalley against Charles II., was mindful that a bird of the air would repeat every word of the discussion to the Hannahs and Elizabeths and Temperances; and the Townsman and Soldier who had faced Pequots, hostile New Yorkers under Andross, the embattled Dutch, and the terrible conspiracy under King Philip, could not forget that every whisper in the meeting would be telephoned to the “pink and white tyrants” named Joanna and Rebecca and Charity and Prudence; and Jones and Munson resolved upon a masterly discretion.

We pass now to Thomas Munson’s judicial career.

At the age of fifty-one he was elected to the Plantation Court, a tribunal which was convened monthly “to hear and determine inferiour causes,—if ‘Civill,’ ‘in valew Plantation Court. not exceeding twenty Pounds;’ if ‘Criminall,’ ‘when the punishment by Scripture Light, exceeds not stocking, and whipping,’ or ‘when the fine exceeds not five Pounds.’ The ‘fit and able men’ chosen for this service are styled ‘the ordinary judges.’ Those elected in 1662 were ‘Mr. John Davenport, Jun., Leiftenant John Nash, Ensigne Thomas Munson, and James Bishop.’ They were all twice re-elected, and they held office until Charles II. united the New Haven and Connecticut colonies.

It was not until after the Union that trial by jury was instituted. Lieut. Munson was a member of the first jury impanelled at New Haven,¹ and he was its foreman. This was in October. He was also foreman of the juries in January and February following.

In 1666 the Lieutenant was designated as supernumerary Commissioner, to perform duty as a member of the monthly court, in a contingency.

Again, our pioneer was a member for many years of the supreme Court of Appeals, in that period, to wit, the General Court for the Jurisdiction,—at first that of New

^{Court of Appeals.} Haven colony, and after the Union, that of Connecticut.

One of the six general functions of this high court, in the New Haven colony, was thus stated: “To hear and determine all causes, whether Civil or Criminall, wh^{ch} by appeal or complaint shall be orderly brought unto them, either from any inferior Court, or from any of the Plantations.” In Connecticut colony a similar custom was in force.²

Legislative.

Let us now advance to contemplate Munson’s career as a legislator.

In 1662 and 1663 he was elected “third man” or substitute deputy for four sessions of the General Court of New Haven colony, and at the third session he had occasion to take his seat and act. In 1664 he was elected New Haven General Court. deputy for two sessions of the same body. The next year,—it will be remembered that there was a great deal of contention between the colonies in regard to a union,—Connecticut invited New Haven to send deputies to a General Assembly to be holden on the 15th

¹ 1665.

² 1683.

of March. "After much debate," says the record, "it was thought best to send," and Lieut. Thomas Munson and John Cooper were chosen to represent the community. That meeting of the Assembly was "put by," and a summons to another for April 20th being issued, "the former deputies declaring themselves not willing to goe," there was a new choice, though a minority objected to sending. There is no doubt that the unwritten history connected with these events would be very entertaining if we could recover it. Lieut. Munson was chosen "third man" for the October session of 1665, and he was elected to the same situation in 1668 and 1684.

In 1666 he was elected deputy to the General Assembly, and he served in this capacity twenty-four sessions, a very impressive testimony to the extraordinary esteem in which his legislative qualifications were held.

It appears, therefore, that he represented New Haven in the colonial legislatures twenty-seven sessions. He was in the Assembly nineteen consecutive sessions, with one exception during King Philip's war when he was engrossed with military duties. The town was represented by two persons each session. During thirteen years, 1669-1682, there were fifty-six individual elections of deputies, twenty-three of which fell to Munson and thirty-three to seven other men,—the former being elected more times than any three of his competitors,—while in every instance except one he was at the head of the delegation,—evincing his easy preëminence among the sterling citizens who filled this office in his time.

Be it observed that legislation in the age of Pioneer Munson was something else than atomizing rose-water. It was the mighty task of sagacious statesmen. Not theirs the vocation to conserve and administer a ready-made

¹ 1669-1678.

system. They had need to be colossal inventors in the sphere of government, for they were founders of new, unique, exemplary institutions. Liberty regulated by law was the beneficent object to be attained. To originate and elaborate a fabric of self-government—an expression of intelligence, wisdom and virtue, and to be maintained by intelligence, wisdom and virtue,—this, conducted in allegiance to the divine government, was the sublime task assumed by the colonial legislators. And this work, you should remark, might not be done at leisure, but amidst diversions and embarrassments springing from other unfriendly and often hostile communities,—the aborigines, the English and again the Dutch of New York, the Rhode Islanders, and we may as well add, (softly,) the English Crown.

Military.

There remains to be considered the military career of our versatile and indefatigable forefather.

A few explanations may be premised. The earlier musket¹ was a match-lock; “four fathom of match” was the allowance for each, and those performing guard-duty during the time of meeting on the Lord’s-Days, were to “have their matches lighted.” These muskets gave way gradually to flint-locks; five or six good flints fitted to each of these were the allowance. Pikes fourteen feet long were used by the infantry, and half-pikes, ten feet long, were used by “dragoones,” *i. e.*, soldiers trained to perform duty either as infantry or cavalry. One in five was provided with this weapon.² The artillery were also drilled in its use. Every family was to furnish itself with a coat

¹ 1643.

² In Connecticut Colony, 1666.

of canvas "quilted with cotton woole," to serve as a "defence against Indian arrowes." The inspection of arms took place "at the meeting-house."¹

The "trained band," mentioned as early as April, 1640, included every male from sixteen to sixty years of age,² and comprised at first four squadrons, with four sergeants. Each man was equipped with a gun and a sword.³ There were at least six "traynings" every year. The "watch" was set by a sergeant "one hour after sunset,"⁴ and each of three pairs patrolled by turns. An alarm was sounded⁵ by a discharge of arms, with a cry of "Fire! fire!" or "Arme! arme!" according to the nature of the danger; the beating of the drum was added. One-fourth of the "trayned band"⁶ (and in times of special peril, all⁷) were to come to public worship "with their armes Compleat;" others, six only exempted, "are to bring their swords."⁸ While one sentinel stood on the meeting-house, another stood at the door, and two patrols walked the streets.⁹

In August, 1642, "bro: Mounson" was chosen Sergeant of the "Trayned Band," an office ranking perhaps with that of major in our late war. For nineteen years he is called by this title, and very busy years they must have been, with the trainings, the setting of night-watches, and attending to the guard on days of public meetings, and to the armed contingent among the worshipers,—to which were added special proceedings at frequent periods when dangers threatened. That his services as an officer were appreciated is evinced by a record under date of Sept. 10, 1649: "The Gouerner Informed the Court that Sarjant Munson is aboute goeing To Connecticote, to staye this winter: therefore the Court

¹ 1649. ² 1644. ³ 1644. ⁴ 1648. ⁵ 1640. ⁶ 1644. ⁷ June, 1644.

⁸ 1640. ⁹ 1653.

maye Consider whether it be safe for y^e towne to lett him goe: the Court thought it not fitt that he should now goe: but desired the Gouerner to Informe them at Connecticote whom it Concernes, that it is not his neglect: but the Towne hinders him for publique respects."

At some court,¹ there was complaint of the Sergeant's "neglecting to give out the bills . . . in season, . . . whereby the watch could not be full one night." A fine of 6^s: 8^d: was ordered; but it was subsequently remitted. He was once² complained of for "taking away 3 hands fro^m traynings to goe fetch hay." Some one had broken a promise to attend to it "while he was gonn to Moheigen." The motive was imperious,—it was the only chance, even with the help of "Canowes,"—but "he was fyned 2/8 each person." Again³ he was accused of taking some men from the company "upon A trayning day," and "said he would Answer it." He replied that "the thing was not True." The Pastor's "sellar" was to be "stoned," and he desired the Sergeant to "gitt helpe & Come & underett the house," on a certain day. "That will be training day," replied the officer. But Mr. Davenport said, "lett him gett men and he would freely paye the fine if the towne required it." The Sergeant alleged, moreover, that "he came not at the Company that morning." After some testimony was offered, "The Court told Sariant Munson that it seemed there was some mistake in the buisenes." These proceedings were in the "Particular Court." In the General Court, a month later,⁴ the Governor called on any who could establish the charge against the officer, "to speake; if not that then he may be Cleared & men be more wary how they expresse themselves: but none spake to Charge him but rather To Cleare him & so it was past by." A malcontent charged the Sergeant with "partial-

¹ 1649.² 1646.³ 1648.⁴ 1649.

litie" ¹ in omitting to present the names of some members of his squadron who had come late to public worship and of others who "brought not their Armes." As a result of the examination, the accuser "was Tould he had not Carried it well: he should not have lett it passe till he was Complained of himselfe, and then in his distemper declare it: . . . but he said he was sorry for it: Ser-
iant Munson was told y^t the Court Judged him faithful in his Trust."

In 1654, His Highness, Oliver Cromwell, Lord Protector of England, Scotland and Ireland, desired the New England colonies to unite in an expedition against the "Dutch on Hudsons River," in reinforcement of his warfare against Holland. The New Haven colony raised a force, of which Munson was chosen first Sergeant; but before the levy got under way, news came that peace had been concluded.

When an "Artillary Company" was organized in 1645, our Sergeant was constituted a sergeant of that company,

though without vacating his office in the Trained (Artillery.) Band. He appears to have retained his connection with the artillery three years. Of the six "great guns" mentioned, three were located near the Meeting-house and three at the water-side.²

When a small Troope was raised in 1656, Thomas Munson was one of those who volunteered for that (Troope.) form of service. The organization existed seven years.

In 1661 Sergeant Munson, with some misgiving, accepted the office of Ensign or color-bearer. After two years he desired to be released from the position, alleging his insufficiency, "especially in windy weather." At the Ensign. end of the third year, complaint was made that

¹ 1648.

² How early, the writer cannot say.

the colors did not appear in the company. The Ensign reminded the public of his resignation, whereupon a word of reproof was murmur'd and the Ensign was immediately promoted to the office of Lieutenant.¹

This office was perhaps equivalent in rank to that of colonel in our late war. Munson served as Lieutenant twelve years. In 1673, while England and Holland were

at war, the Dutch re-captured New York from Lieutenant.

the English. Connecticut colony took alarm, and appointed a "Grand Committee" for defence, with full power to commission officers, and to press men, horses,

(Grand Committee.) ships, arms, ammunition and provisions, and, in a word, to direct military proceedings in the best

way they can. Munson was a member of this committee. It was ordered, moreover, that 500 dragoons be raised, and that if any forces should be sent out of New Haven County for the relief of another county, Munson should be Lieutenant of the same. Four days later the Grand Committee order that each dragoon have a horse, a sword, a musket, and a half-pike, and that Munson be Lieutenant of those raised in New Haven County. Three months and a half later,² the General Court resolves to send forth forces, by sea and land, against New York, and institutes "a standing Councell of Warr" with full power, and of this Council the Lieutenant was a member. Some forces sailed to the east end of Long Island and expelled the enemy from that region; but the "eminent dangers of warr" were mainly averted until peace was proclaimed.

We come now to the period of King Philip's war, just one hundred years before the war of the Revolution. We

(King Philip's War.) have only an occasional glimpse of Lieut. Munson's movements in this gloomy and horrid con-

¹ 1664.

² Nov. 26, 1673.

test with the barbarians; for the records are too meagre and indefinite.

July 2nd, 1675, a public meeting was "suddenly" called on receiving news that Philip, "a bloody man," had assaulted "seacunck" and "swansy" in Plymouth colony, while there had also been disturbance "in the Narragansett Country." Some houses had been burned, about thirty English slain, and Philip's savages were "engageing the Indians rownd about by sending locks of some English they haue slayne, from one place to another." The colony immediately took up arms. The forces raised at New Haven and other towns on the shore marched towards New London and Stonington. Our Lieutenant was of this army.

But the march was interrupted at Saybrook fort by tidings of the approach of another foe. The odious Andross, recently appointed governor of New York, was behaving in his office like a great, saucy, conscienceless boy whose chief ambition was to act the bully. He claimed and protested that his government extended to the Connecticut river. His bad spirit and his threatening messages made the Connecticut colony suspicious of him, even when, as on this occasion, he loudly professed the most innocent and benevolent intentions. With three vessels and a military force he arrived off Saybrook, July 8th,—alleging that his purpose was to defend the English colonists from the hostile savages; but a memorandum of his, found in the Secretary's Office fourteen years later, acknowledged that he went to the mouth of the Connecticut to take possession by surprise, "but was prevented by the opposition of two companies of men then lodged there ready to go out against the Indians." The proceedings of Andross in asserting his claims, and of the soldier-colonists in denying and combating them, were uncom-

monly picturesque. After five or six days Andross set sail, and Capt. Bull was instructed, July 16th, "to leaue Lnt. Munson to comand at Saybrooke wth some forces for the security of that place," while he himself should march "with as many forces as can be spared," towards New London and Stonington, to secure the frontier against the Indians.

In August the Indians on the Connecticut, above Northampton, began to evince hostility; in the latter part of the month, the Norwottogs at Hadley assaulted the plantations there. Major Treat marched from Connecticut with an army, August 31st, his route to Northampton being *via* Westfield.

September 19th, the following commission was issued to our gallant ancestor:

"To Thomas Munson, L^{nt}.

"These are in his Mat^{ies} Name to will and require you to take under your conduct the forces that now com from the County of New Haven; and them you are forthwith to lead up to Norwottock, and from thence up the River to our army, with whom you are to joyne in the defence of those plantations up the River; and you are to kill and destroy all such Indian enemies as shall assault you or the sayd plantations," etc. Norwottock (now Hadley) was the headquarters of the colonial army. There was a fort in the bend of the river at that point. Already Northfield and Deerfield had fallen before the enemy, and "the flower of Essex" had been massacred at Bloody Brook.

We can seldom individualize our ancestor amidst the smoke, the confusion, the multiform obscuration of Philip's war. Fifteen days later, the Agawams, under Sachem Wequogian, hitherto friendly, received two hundred and seventy of Philip's Indians, designing the next day,

October 5th, to burn Springfield. Toto, a Windsor Indian, discovered their secret, and during the night the news was sent by a swift horseman to Springfield and thence to Westfield and Hadley. The inhabitants of the doomed town betook themselves to the garrisons, and the six hundred warriors burned thirty-three houses and twenty-five barns and the mill. Treat's army, of which Munson's command formed a part, was at Westfield when Toto's disclosure was brought to that point, and it immediately marched for Springfield. Hubbard, in his *Indian Wars*, observes: "No doubt the whole town had been totally destroyed, but that a Report of the Plot being carried about over night, Major Treat came from Westfield time enough in a Manner for the Rescue, but wanting Boats to transport his Men, could not do so much Good as he desired." "He arrived there," however, says an eminent student of colonial history,¹ "in time to save the lives of the inhabitants, and a part of the town from the flames."

Five days after the Lieutenant was commissioned to conduct the New Haven County dragoons to the seat of war, the town of New Haven appointed a committee, including Munson, "to erect some fortification at the meeting-house," and, if deemed best, elsewhere. After the burning of Springfield, it was ordered, agreeably to the suggestion of the committee, that some houses be fortified, that at the four angles of the town-square superior fortifications be erected, and that there be a line of pallisadoes all about the town-square; each inhabitant was required to build four rods of this stockade. It was also ordered that all brush and underwood within half a mile of the pallisadoes be cut down and cleared away, that the shelter they afforded might not assist

¹ J. Hammond Trumbull, LL.D.

the Indians "to creep in a skulking manner neare y^e Towne."¹

It should be minded that Munson was a Townsman during these dark and bloody years, and thus most intimately related to all local proceedings connected with the war.

February 25th, 1676, Lieut. Munson was "appoynted Captain of N. Haven County souldiers, and commisioned accordingly." This was as high rank as had been attained by any citizen of New Haven, (about equivalent to general in our time,) and it remained the highest for seven or eight years longer.² May 15th, the General Court, in view of the strength of the enemy and the outrages they were committing, instituted "a standing army" of which "Captⁿ Tho: Munson was chosen Captⁿ for N. Haven County."

Portrait and Character.

We have now sampled the acts and events in Captain Munson's life as fully as our limitations permit. Is not his career a panorama which his posterity may contemplate with just pleasure and rational pride? James I., Charles I., Cromwell, Charles II., were the British sovereigns in his day: what favorite was elevated to a barony, an earldom or a dukedom, who was so rich in manly worth, whose essential nobility shone with so much lustre, whose public services were so various, so valuable and so monumental? Let every heart admire him, every lip

¹ The next March—"It was ordered that noe person shall plant any Indian corne within two rod of the stockaded line;" and, also, "y^t noe Indian bee suffered to com into y^e Towne to see the fortifications or take notis of any of our actings and motions."

² 1683.

praise him, every son and daughter emulate his resplendent example.

O that we had a portrait of him ! Well, I will paint one reflecting my conception of him. A light-complexioned man, with blue eyes and brown hair; his nose straight and prominent; in person, larger and taller than the average man, probably; erect, methodical, prompt and dignified, as became his soldierly profession; courtly, as became his judicial and legislative associations.

Passing from the outward appearance,—he was a man of irrepressible aspiration; he was a man of superior intelligence,—and his fine autograph indicates cultivation; he was a man of leonine courage; a man of tireless energy; a man whose judgment was preëminent,—the *solitaire* of his faculties; a man whose versatility was wonderful,—perhaps not less exceptional than his judgment; his integrity, so far as appears, was whiteness and brightness; and, in fine, his place was on the side of the All-wise and the All-holy.

What remains ? This beautiful, historic Green is fretted with our worthy's footsteps as multitudinously as the aisles of autumnal forests with fallen leaves. Hundreds of times he walked hither with stately step to the monthly courts and the general courts for the plantation and the jurisdiction; hundreds of times has he come with martial step to attend train-band, artillery and cavalry exercises; 1500 times has he marched hither at evening to set the nightly watch; 4000 times has he come over this ground, with a semi-devout aspect, to attend the Wednesday lecture; 9000 times he has walked reverently, yet with something of soldierly energy, precision and stateliness in his gait, to the public worship on the Lord's-days. I cannot estimate his visits to this Green at fewer than 40,000.

His monument? New Haven is his monument, and Connecticut is his monument. There is not a stone in the foundations of this enchanting town which his hand has not touched, adjusted, embellished. Turn which way you will, go which way you will, you have only to brush off the dust and rub off the lichens to find "MUNSON fecit."

But you, my dear kinsmen, are the living monument of Thomas Munson. It may be said with candor and sobriety that the descendants of this man exhibit a very high average of ability, uprightness, thrift and respectability. And you have made his name creditably known in your several residences from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of Mexico and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Aye, more: here and there across the nation you have caused his name to be inscribed in characters which are truly monumental, as in the case of Munson Street and Munson Park in this city; Munson's Hill in Virginia—covered with history six fathoms deep; Munson Hill—a post-village in Ohio; Munsonville in New Hampshire, Munsonville in New York, Munson's Station in Pennsylvania, the township of Munson in Illinois, and the township of Munson in Nebraska.

As we pass in grand review before the Captain, he will certainly contemplate very many and very much with approbation and applause; but no member of the procession will have merit enough, I had almost said half enough merit, to entitle him to measure arms with our greatest soldier and ablest civilian, Thomas the First.

POSTERITY OF THOMAS MUNSON.

The scope of this discourse includes a few glimpses of Thomas Munson's posterity.

His only son Samuel was by trade a shoemaker, with which that of a tanner was probably combined. He also owned and cultivated farming lands. His military rank was that of Ensign. Early in 1670 he joined with

^{His Son} Samuel. John Mosse, John Brockitt, Nathaniel Merriman,

and twenty-two other New Haveners, in the founding of Wallingford, ten miles north-north-easterly. He was nearly twenty-seven, the age at which his father settled in New Haven. His daughter and eldest son had been born before his removal; the next five sons were born during the eleven years of his residence in Wallingford, notwithstanding which the elder three were born in New Haven, and only Joseph and Stephen in Wallingford; Caleb, and two younger sons who have no posterity, were born after the return to New Haven in 1681. Ens. Samuel, if we may trust the records, was the first schoolmaster at Wallingford;¹ he was for a time the public drummer; his residence during the early years was the place of public worship, for which some compensation was rendered. He was on the important committee to determine the rules for the allotment of the lands,² which were at first all common. At the age of thirty he was elected one of the Townsmen, and he was chosen to the same office the following year and also the last two years he was in Wallingford.³ One year he was chosen leather-sealer,⁴ another treasurer,⁵ two years auditor,⁶ two years recorder of lands,⁷ and five years assessor.⁸ In 1681, at the age of

¹ 1679. ² 1672. ³ 1673, 1674, 1680, 1681. ⁴ 1678. ⁵ 1680. ⁶ 1676? 1679. ⁷ 1679, 1681. ⁸ 1677-1681.

thirty-eight, he was chosen recorder, assessor and townsman, indicating that had he remained in Wallingford he would have been employed very extensively in public service. The first year of Philip's war, he was commissioned Ensign of the Wallingford Trained Band; next month the colonial Council appointed him and another "to sign bills;" and in March following, he and another wrote a letter to the Council in respect to "garrison-houses, and watches and wardes." In 1679 "The Towne made Choyce of Eñ Sam^{ll} Munson & Eliasaph Preston to goe up to the Hon^{le} Gourner . . . to inquire y^e Reason why they are deprived of Comission maiestraycy among them." After his return to New Haven, he was chosen fence-viewer,¹ constable,² and assessor;³ and during five years, probably ten, beginning with 1683, he and his brother-in-law, Joseph Tuttle, were elected searchers and sealers of leather. For one year, and apparently longer—not unlikely three years, our Ensign was Rector of the Hopkins Grammar School. He died⁴ before he was fifty, surviving his father less than eight years. (The Captain's age was seventy-three.) We may well lament the premature decease of our second ancestor, whose promise and whose performance also had been so admirable. Let it be distinctly recognized, cousins, recognized with veneration, that Ensign Samuel was the common ancestor of all the descendants of Capt. Thomas who bear the Munson name.

We are now to glance at the footprints of seven sons of the Ensign—grandsons of the Captain. Thomas, John, Theophilus and Stephen dwelt in New Haven; Samuel, Joseph and Caleb in Wallingford. It may be remarked

¹ 1686.

² 1692.

³ 1692.

⁴ Between Dec. 26, 1692, when he was elected constable, and March 2, 1693, when the inventory of his estate was dated.

that all these brothers, whatever their trades or other employments, had ample possessions in land.

1. Samuel, of Wallingford, Town Clerk and Recorder thirty-nine years.¹ I have examined several thousand pages in his handwriting. In conveyances his vocation is

said to be that of "Planter." His military title,

Grandson Samuel. like that of his father, was Ensign. He served

as treasurer, auditor, school-committee, four years, lister, four years, and selectman, six years. He was also chosen to six minor offices, involving thirteen years of service. There is record of yet another public appointment, in September, 1704: "The town chose Samuell Monson to look after the yong people at the lore eand of the meting house." His age at death was seventy-two.

2. Thomas, of New Haven. He was fourteen years old at the death of the Captain, and was the only grandchild who participated in the distribution of the old

Grandson Thomas. gentleman's estate. This partiality was most likely out of respect to his name. To him were

given his grandfather's "armes & amunition," his tools, a colt, "6 acres of land in the . . . Governors quarter, & y^t parcell of meadow lying att the red banke," with some other things. According to the designation in deeds, Thomas was by vocation a "husbandman." He was chosen to a minor office at the age of twenty, and to another three years later, to which he was three times re-elected; but his official career was inconspicuous. At the age of twenty-eight² he sold his place, the homestead of his father and grandfather, on Grove and Temple streets, to his brother John, and then or presently removed to lands on the First and Second Brooks, and on Sacket's Brook. This farm, lying on the west side of the

¹ 1711-1740.

² 1709.

Quinnipiac, was a landmark much employed in describing places in that region. Thomas bought three and one-half acres, bounded easterly on Sacket's brook, of Jonathan Edwards, that renowned metaphysician and divine whom Robert Hall declared to be "the greatest of the sons of men." In 1716, when the project of locating Yale College in New Haven was under contemplation, a number of citizens thought to encourage the enterprise by donating forty acres of land to its treasury; Thomas gave two acres and Theophilus one. This "Colledge lott" was "about half a mile Northerly of Thomas Munsons," and a Wallingford record describes Munson as "of Newhaven north village." There are indications in some of his conveyances that Thomas was a humorous man. He lived to the age of seventy-five.

3. Capt. John, of New Haven, who, taken all in all—his versatility, the variety of his activities and achievements, and the number, value and eminence of his public services

being regarded,—possibly excels any other descendant of Thomas Munson. In documents, for

<sup>Grandson
John.</sup> twenty years, he is called a "maultster" or "malster;" and from 1722, a "miller." In 1716, during the reign of George I., he bought a new corn-mill, located on Beaver-Pond Brook; at a later period it had a bolting department. Ten years later, he and others built a saw-mill "upon the West River above Sperrys farme;" he owned at least a quarter interest. Nine years later, he bought a one-third interest in Todd's mill, a lineal descendant of the first mill in New Haven; it was on Mill river, opposite Mill-Rock, and at this period, a "Bakehouse" was a part of the property. When he became a miller, he sold his place on Grove and Temple streets to Theophilus, and resided eastward of the West-Rock, where his business was. He had a "malt-house" *there*

also. In 1712, he obtained a grant of land for a wharf. He was key-keeper, grand-juror, constable, two years, collector, two years, leather-sealer, six years, assessor, two years, Townsman, nine years, Deputy to the General Assembly, ten sessions. At the age of thirty-six¹ he had won the title of Captain, and from that date for more than ten years he was annually elected Moderator for all the town meetings of the year. This fact has a unique and brilliant look. Capt. John was chosen the first Steward of Yale College, an office which he filled three years.² The first attempt to establish regular communication between New Haven and Hartford was in 1717, when the General Assembly gave Capt. John the exclusive right of transporting persons and goods between the two places for seven years. This franchise was granted in consideration of his having been at "the cost and charge to set up a waggon to pass and transport passengers and goods." "On the first Monday of every month, excepting December, January, February, and March," he was to "set forth with the said waggon from New Haven, and with all convenient despatch drive up to Hartford, and thence in the same week return to New Haven." There was a fine of forty shillings for infringing on Munson's privilege. This stage is believed to have run at intervals of two weeks,—doing better than the statute required. It remains to add that John Munson was a Deacon of the First Church; we do not know the limits of his term of service, but he was in office in October, 1742, and December, 1748. The last record which mentions him as living is February 6, 1749; he was then seventy-six years of age.

4. Capt. Theophilus, of New Haven, whose prominence among the seven brothers was next to that of John. His

¹ 1709.² 1718-1721.

dealings in real-estate were extensive, and he was decidedly successful in acquiring property. By trade he

Grandson
Theophilus. was a "locksmith." He held four minor offices by fifteen elections. He was also constable, collector

and treasurer, tithingman, three years, lister, three years, and thirty-three times at least he was elected sealer of weights and measures. He was Townsman eight years, and Deputy to the General Assembly three sessions. In 1712 he was on a town-committee to assist in laying out the undivided land, and nine years later was on another committee to prepare plans for the sixth division. He and five others, in 1717, were granted an area of "the flats" eight rods wide, "beginning at the end of the highway leading down by Capt. Prouts to the water side: provided that the sd Grantees build a wharfe forty Rods long . . . and twenty foots wide . . . within eight years." We note as a curiosity that the price of five acres purchased by Theophilus, in 1708, was a "neagro woman Called Hagur," together with five pounds, twelve shillings. This prosperous man resided forty-five years on College street, at the corner of Wall, where Prest. Dwight resides, and he died at the age of seventy-two.

5. Ens. Joseph, of Wallingford,—by trade a "joyner." He occupied two inferior offices by six elections. He was

Grandson
Joseph. also grand-juror, an assessor three years, and a Townsman in 1713. His residence is located by

a record made in 1716: "The lower end of the town¹ begins at Joseph Munsons." He was only fifty-two years old when he died.

6. Sergt. Stephen, of New Haven,—by trade a "locksmith" and also "gunn smith." He was chosen to three minor offices by eighteen elections; he was also constable, collector, two years, assessor, two years, and a Townsman in 1731 and 1733. It is in evidence

Grandson
Stephen.

¹ Village.

that he had a "Negro man" whom he sold. You may recall the thought of Mr. Everett: "The faults of our fathers were the faults of the age in which they lived; their virtues were their own." And we do well to ruminate on a remark of Coleridge, to wit: "A dwarf sees farther than the giant when he has the giant's shoulder to mount on." Sergt. Stephen's home for sixty-six years was at the northwest corner of Grove and State streets. He died at the age of eighty-nine. He had been blind for some years.

7. Caleb, of Wallingford,—by trade a "weaver." He was chosen grand-juror, tithingman, school-committee, and in 1743 first Selectman. At the end of the year the citizens "Voted that they would except the Select Mens Account Read to them in General without hearing the Particulars or having any further examination." This is a novel record, and highly complimentary to Caleb. The board was re-elected, with our relative at the head of it. This seventh son of the Ensign died at the age of eighty-three.

The last survivor of these seven brothers died one hundred and nineteen years ago, seven years before the Revolutionary war. The four who lived in this town were all members of the church which worships in this house: the early records of the Wallingford church are not extant.

We are nearly at the end of our tether.

In the next generation, the fourth, Solomon removed to New Jersey and Ephraim to Massachusetts. In the fifth, Obadiah the Second removed to Pennsylvania, Timothy and Caleb to Vermont, Dr. Austin, Joseph and ^{Migrations.} Benjamin to New York, Hermon to Ohio, and Cornelius to the British army. In the sixth generation the migrations from Connecticut were numerous.

A letter from Munson's Hill, Va., has the following: "I have heard my grandfather say that he had heard his father¹ say that he knew New Haven when more than half the signs on business-houses bore the name of Munson." This ancient witness was forty-one years old when the battle of Bunker Hill was fought.

A Few Names.

Among deceased Munsons who have been notably prominent in business were Capt. Joseph, merchant, and Dr. Aeneas, Jr., merchant and banker of New Haven; Reuben, a manufacturer of combs in New York City, and Israel, a merchant of Boston, who "was a distinguished benefactor of humane and literary institutions." Alfred, of Utica, was the first manufacturer of buhr mill-stones in this country; he engaged widely in transportation enterprises; he invested extensively and profitably in the coal-fields of Pennsylvania,—and became a millionaire. Norman C., of Boston, deserves, by the boldness of his undertakings and the greatness of his achievements, to stand at the head of our business-men. His record in the construction of railroads is an astonishment, while the filling of the Back Bay region at Boston was the greatest contract ever executed in Massachusetts. The equipment for the work embraced twenty-five miles of track, fourteen locomotives, two hundred and twenty-five cars and two steam excavators. For seventeen years he ran his trains and excavators night and day, most of the time. He became a millionaire by this contract.

A good number of our race have been educated in colleges. Yale has graduated twenty-one of our blood and name; sixteen took the academic course, and five a profes-

¹ Timothy.

sional. Among our divines was Samuel, the missionary, who laid down his life while on a tour of inquiry among the cannibals of Sumatra. The ministers in our own age, include three college-presidents, several men with the title of D. D., and other doctors of divinity unfurnished with the title. There are lawyers and judges on the roll of the family; one of them has been attorney-general of the United States and minister to England. But the Munson profession for four generations has been that of medicine. And the numerous catalogue is of respectable quality. Eneas the First, whom the elders designate as "old Dr. Munson," was probably our most distinguished professional man. He practiced medicine seventy years. When the medical department of Yale College was instituted, in 1813, he was chosen professor of *materia medica* and botany. "It is undoubtedly true," says Dr. Bronson, who is rather fond of disparagement, "it is undoubtedly true that in the matter of professional learning and scientific information, he ranked with the eminent men of his country." "Dr. Munson was a pioneer," says Dr. Ives, "in the science of Botany;" he was "unrivalled in his knowledge of indigenous *materia medica*, and in *materia medica* generally probably his superior was not to be found in Europe. . . . To Dr. Munson," he continues, "the faculty of this country were more indebted for the introduction of new articles and valuable modes of practice than to any other individual." . . . He "studied Chemistry with zeal and made many chemical experiments." For a time "he was looked upon as a master of the science, and no one in the vicinity was as well acquainted with Mineralogy. . . . He was looked up to by all his medical brethren on all subjects relating to Chemistry and Pharmacy." Thus far Prof. Ives. Prof. Silliman, sen., was accustomed, in his earlier lectures, to

speak of Dr. Munson with deference. He was above the average size, erect and dignified. Seven sessions he was deputy to the General Court. Dr. Eneas has been much celebrated as a wit and humorist. A great number of his brilliant explosives are still extant. You might perhaps search history in vain to find another so eminent in the gravest pursuits who said and did so many things which were supremely amusing. He was gathered to his fathers in 1826.

That a great number, a very surprising number, of our ancestors participated in the Revolutionary war is an embellishment of our name. Nearly all espoused the patriot-cause, though a very few remained loyal to the Crown. Some of the latter migrated to Canada. Major William Munson, of this city, shall be a sample of our noblemen in that great era. His youngest daughter, at the age of ninety-five, participates in our festivities to-day. Major William, who was a first cousin of Benedict Arnold's first wife, was a lieutenant—from November, 1775—in Arnold's expedition to Quebec. There is extant an "Accompt" of the baggage lost by our officer "att the Retreat from Quebec the 6th of May 1776." He was in command at Dobbs Ferry when Andre was executed as a spy. He was discharged in 1783. His residence in this city was on the northeast corner of State and Fair streets. At the time of the British Invasion, in July, 1779, the house was deserted, Mrs. Munson having gone to Wallingford. Her mother, Mrs. John Hall, who lived directly opposite, on the corner of Fair and Fleet streets, went over to the Major's, Monday afternoon, July 5th, to see if there were any valuables which should be made secure. While she was on the steps a British officer came along, drew his sword, with which she feared he was about to cut her throat, clipped a string of gold beads

from her neck, and then—gallant gentleman that he was—took the silver buckles from her shoes. The next morning, presumably, as the fleet sailed away, an eighteen-pound shot, after perforating the Sabin house, passed under the sill of a window at which Mrs. Munson usually sat when sewing. The ball crossed the room and struck the back of the capacious fireplace, when its force was spent. It was conceived to have come five miles.¹ The Major had the ball replaced where it struck and fastened there. Our venerable cousin, Mrs. Grace Munson Wheeler, has many times seen her father, when visitors were present, take up the tongs and brush the soot from the ball, to show it to them. That historic missile I now hold in my hand. For thirty-three years our veteran was a Surveyor of the Customs,—his first commission bearing the autograph of both Washington and Jefferson. When LaFayette visited New Haven, more than forty years after the war,² he promptly recognized the Major and embraced him. The latter's grand-daughter, who is present with us, was then a school-girl, and she remembers going to the Franklin House and stealing an opportunity to touch the illustrious Frenchman's coat. Munson's certificate as a member of the Society of the Cincinnati was signed by Washington.

The Typical Munson.

Shall I now portray the average, the representative, the typical Munson? You reply something about a conundrum. But conundrums are sometimes solved.

He is of rather light complexion, with eyes having some degree of blueness, and hair brownish or of some related shade; his nose is rather prominent, and pretty straight,—

¹ Probably not.

² 1824.

this, by the way, is his most characteristic feature; in person he is seldom small, though his height, weight and form are most varied and uncertain,—not unfrequently tall, yet frequently not tall, but, as he ripens in years, exhibiting aldermanic prosperity in the equatorial regions; a vigorous animal, enduring a great deal of hard work and surviving a good deal of abuse,—and dying at the age of seventy-three.

The typical Munson has individuality—is more like himself than like anybody else,—has withal a habit of *thinking* and of respecting his own views; he has a liberal allotment of will-power; he is unsatisfied unless occupying a plane above that occupied by the majority of his fellow-mortals, yet is not ambitious to soar to dizzy heights; he is intelligent and well-informed; he devotes himself assiduously to his vocation; he is provident, not lavish,—spending and giving with fidelity for worthy purposes, and most likely on occasions of highest worthiness, giving bountifully; he is decidedly practical—with little ideality,—is neither poet nor artist, nor visionary in practical affairs; he is conservative, not in haste to exchange the tried for the untried,—yet is he sometimes inventive and adventurous; he has a strain of humor and playfulness in his composition; he is an upright man and a religious man—loyal to the Son of God and to the great First Cause.

Concluding Generalizations.

Of riffraff bearing our label there is extremely, infinitesimally little. Our people are respectable farmers, excellent mechanics, thriving store-keepers, sagacious merchants, enterprising and prosperous manufacturers,—and they are evermore desired by their fellow-citizens to

accept of public trusts. Those who become scholars are scholarly, and our professional men are a credit to our name. Even the Munson artist has been seen, though a *rara avis*. French, author of *Art and Artists in Connecticut*, says of Lucius, born 1796: "As a portrait painter he not only gave good promise for the future, but had already accomplished much. His pictures show good taste, and skill in drawing. He was a careful student, and his work was free and bold." He died at Turk's Island in his twenty-seventh year. We have also, in the author of *Woman in Sacred Song*, a cousin who is an accomplished composer of music, as well as a mellifluous singer.

In politics, an immense majority of our people are Republican; yet the cream of the Democratic party is Munsonian. In religion, the first four or five generations were Congregationalists, perhaps to a man; now, besides Congregationalists, we have very many Methodists, a considerable number of Episcopalians, some Baptists, some Universalists, a few Presbyterians, and others.

We justly recognize, my kinsmen, that there is nothing in our make-up for goslings like Oscar Wilde to take hold of, nothing for the "Salvation Army," nothing for socialistic disorganizers, nothing for religionless materialists: and that we go to the almshouse only for beneficence, and to the criminal court only to act as judge, jury, witness to the truth, or advocate of the cause that is just.

We none of us, my favorites, represent Thomas Munson with any completeness and accuracy; the primitive type has been modified by seven, or eight, or nine marriages; and it has been modified also by the general changes which have affected society—changes in light, in belief, in customs, in institutions, in material conditions; and it makes one's heart stand still to think of the further modifications which may take place in the next two hundred

and fifty years. But let every Munson have the clear conviction that he has an ideal in Captain Thomas which is worthy of his daily contemplation, and let him have the wisdom to find inspiration and guidance and cheer in our first father's great and bright example.

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